



HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

Building a Stronger and Safer Georgia

Georgia Emergency Management Agency

Hazard Mitigation Division

Atlanta, GA 30316

Overview:

Mitigation is the cornerstone of emergency management. Hazard Mitigation is sustained action to reduce or eliminate risks to life and property from natural or man-made hazard events. Through mitigation actions such as sound land-use planning; adoption and enforcement of building codes; property acquisition; elevation and/or relocation outside of floodplains; structural and non-structural retrofitting of existing buildings and facilities; and stormwater management projects, we can protect facilities to assure functionality following an event, reduce exposure to liabilities and minimize disruptions to the community.

Introduction:

Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 established the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The purpose of the program is to provide funds to State agencies and local governments in the aftermath of a disaster for projects that reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from the effects of natural hazards. For this disaster, FEMA will contribute 20% of the amount it will spend for disaster assistance programs to fund the HMGP.

Project Funding and Funding Constraints:

The federal share of HMGP funding cannot exceed 75% of the total eligible project cost. The non-federal share may be met with cash, contributions, certain other grants such as Community Development Block Grants, or with in-kind services. Grants will be made available to eligible applicants on a competitive basis statewide with priority given to the federally declared counties. The state may contribute a percentage of the non-federal cost share based on severity of damage for the counties included in the presidential disaster declaration for Individual and Public Assistance.

HMGP Application Process:

The HMGP is administered by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA). GEMA Hazard Mitigation staff offer technical assistance to local governments for project identification and application preparation. GEMA also is responsible for the review, prioritization and funding recommendation of eligible projects to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA is responsible for making all final funding decisions on projects submitted by the state.

Following a presidential disaster declaration, GEMA announces the HMGP grant application information, usually within 30-60 days of the disaster declaration date. Pre-applications are required based on project type. Upon favorable review of pre-applications, HMGP applications are sent to the applicants. Completed applications usually are required within nine (9) months of the declaration date. Applications are evaluated and projects are recommended to FEMA for approval and funding based on prioritization and available funds. All applications must be submitted to FEMA within twelve (12) months of the disaster declaration date. Upon notification of approval and funding, grant agreements between the state and applicant are executed. Projects are given up to three years for completion based on scope and complexity.

TYPES OF HMGP PROJECTS THAT COULD BE ELIGIBLE:

- Initiative Projects such as the development or improvement of warning systems with mitigation as an essential component;
- Construction of safe rooms (tornado and severe wind shelters) for public and private structures that meet the FEMA construction criteria in FEMA 320, "Taking Shelter from the Storm" and FEMA 361, "Design and Construction Guidance for Community Shelters" 2nd Ed., August 2008;
- Retrofitting methods such as elevation in place, structure relocation, structural reinforcement (wind and seismic), strapping of utilities, installation of storm shutters, tie downs, etc.;
- Acquisition of property and/or relocation of homes, businesses and public facilities from hazard prone areas;
- Wildfire mitigation such as creating defensible space, application of ignition-resistant construction and hazardous fuel reduction;
- Soil stabilization projects that provide protection from erosion and landslides;
- Structural hazard control or protection measures such as floodwalls, detention basins and other storm drainage upgrades; and
- Development of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in accordance with 44 CFR 201.6.

Generally, a project should:

- Substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss or suffering from a major disaster;
- Conform with federal floodplain, wetland and environmental regulations;
- Solve a problem independently, or part of a problem when there is assurance that the whole project will be completed;
- Be **cost-effective** in that it addresses a problem that is repetitive or that poses a significant risk if left unsolved;
- Contribute substantially to the problem's long-term solution;
- Have manageable future maintenance requirements;
- Be determined to be the most practical, effective and environmentally sound alternative among the possible options;
- Conform to the goals and objectives of Local and State Hazard Mitigation Plans; and
- Have the documented support of the local community.

Some of the reasons that projects / applications are determined to be ineligible:

- Project is for operation and maintenance versus disaster-related mitigation;
- Project is the responsibility of another federal agency, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the Natural Resources Conservation Service;
- Project is the result of deferred maintenance rather than related to a natural hazard;
- Project has an inadequate benefit/cost ratio (not cost-effective);
- No federally approved local Hazard Mitigation Plan; and
- Non-participation in the National Flood Insurance Program.

For further information, write us at the address below or call the State Hazard Mitigation Program Office at (404) 635-7522.

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